

APPENDIX F: Community Involvement Process

Stakeholder Groups and Major Themes

Community involvement is critical to the successful development of sound human service policy and programs. We have developed partnerships with human service stakeholders because of the complexity of human service issues and the extent of human service needs our community faces. The stakeholder involvement process for the Strategic Investment Plan included over 40 focus group discussions across six stakeholder groups (clients, funders, employees, providers, neighborhoods / residents, and faith, business and other community leaders).

We met with existing groups at their regular meeting times to the maximum extent possible. A list of community stakeholders is attached. Each focus group included a brief overview of the Department and the framework for the Strategic Investment Plan, as well as discussion on key options for considerations. We agreed to take the actual plan back out to interested groups.

The following summary describes major themes across community stakeholders and key themes amongst the Department employee focus groups:

1. Major Themes - Community Stakeholders

Cross Community Stakeholder Groups:

- There was appreciation for the department's community involvement process and interest in continued dialogue with the department.
- There was strong support for the department's continued funding for **both** Safety Net and Prevention/Economic Self-Sufficiency Programs.
- Services most often mentioned as priorities included shelter with services (employment and case management), education and employment, youth activities, child care subsidies and services, culturally relevant services especially for immigrant and refugees, and domestic violence services and shelters.
- Access to information about and delivery of coordinated holistic services was a noted concern.
- Interest in culturally relevant, community-based information, outreach and access to services was also discussed across groups.

Additional themes within Community Stakeholder Groups:

Funders

- Appreciated the system approach, expressed interest in aligning resources. A number of funders were interested in collaborating on evaluation, goal setting and regional funding.

Clients

- Noted appreciation for Seattle's good services, though there is not enough to meet all of the needs.
- Homeless families prioritized education programs to help their children and, at a meeting with forty homeless men, the group's consensus was that shelter for women and children should be prioritized over shelter services for single men.
- Clients also discussed the importance for programs and staff to be accountable, treat clients with respect and understand their needs. Comments in this area included a need for training and increased outreach to communities of color.
- In relation to ongoing relationships with stakeholder groups, there was a common theme for homeless population focus groups: more City departments should hold focus groups and that HSD should meet with the community more often.

Providers

- There was focused concern for increased cost of tracking outcomes and a need for streamlined reporting and user friendly technology.
- Need for increased agency capacity building was mentioned across providers (e.g., staff training to improve services, information technology and fund development).
- Agencies also spoke to the need for HSD to collaborate more with large entities such as Parks and Recreation, the School District and Public Health.
- Across providers, HSD was viewed as needing to strengthen its advocacy role at the state and federal level. Survival services providers recommended increasing funding for community education and organizing.

2. Employee Focus Group Themes

- Strong themes across the employee focus groups were to place a greater emphasis on prevention and to help people make meaningful change in their lives for the long-term.

- There is strong sentiment that HSD needs to increase accountability to the community and that the Department needs increased community leadership and involvement.
- Coordinated and holistic approaches to working with customers and more services for immigrant and refugee groups were most mentioned in terms of service needs.
- Increased private sector involvement in human services was the most mentioned partnership issue mentioned by groups. This includes educating, organizing and facilitating strategies to increase understanding of the value of human services and inclusion of private sector representatives on a human services advisory council.

Community Stakeholder Focus Groups

Consumers / clients

- Seattle Youth Employment students
- Upward Bound / Rewarding Youth Achievement students
- Seattle Jobs Initiative – Office and Manufacturing Classes
- Aging and Disability Services Advisory Council sub-committee
- Early Childhood Education (parents & providers)
- WHEEL
- Hammond House- Women's Shelter
- SHARE
- Sacred Heart Shelter
- Self Sufficiency Project – East Cherry YWCA
- St. Paul's Shelter

Faith Communities / Businesses / Other Community Leaders

- Downtown Ministerial Association
- A Philip Randolph Association (Central)

Neighborhood / Residents

- Native Action Network
- Community Alliance for Youth
- Central Neighborhood District Council
- Southeast Weed & Seed

Funders (Key Informant Meetings)

- United Way
- Casey Family
- Allen Foundation
- Seattle Housing Authority
- Gates Foundation

Providers

- Seattle Human Services Coalition
- Minority Executive Director's Coalition
- COREC (Communities of Refugee Empowerment Coalition)
- Family Support Workers
- West Seattle Providers Coalition
- Family Support Centers, Directors
- Steering Committee / Coalition for the Homeless
- Family Services – homeless families
- Meals Partnership Coalition
- Seattle Food Committee
- Asian-Pacific Islander Director's Coalition
- School's Out Washington